

Advance Questions for Vice Admiral Kurt W. Tidd, USN
Nominee for Commander, United States Southern Command

Defense Reforms

The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DoD) Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Special Operations reforms have strengthened the warfighting readiness of our Armed Forces. They have enhanced civilian control and clearly delineated the operational chain of command and the responsibilities and authorities of the Combatant Commanders, and the role of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. They have also clarified the responsibility of the Military Departments to recruit, organize, train, equip, and maintain forces for assignment to the Combatant Commanders.

Do you see the need for modifications of any Goldwater-Nichols Act provisions? If so, what areas do you believe might be appropriate to address in these modifications?

As an officer whose career was directly transformed by this legislation, I believe the Goldwater-Nichols Act revolutionized the U.S. military and significantly improved the conduct of joint operations. However after almost three decades and multiple changes to the strategic environment, we should welcome a comprehensive review. At this time I do not have any specific recommendations for modifications to the Act, though I believe we must give serious consideration to incentivizing our national security interagency partners to achieve the same kinds of improvements that the Goldwater-Nichols Act brought to the Department of Defense. If confirmed, I look forward to providing this Committee appropriate recommendations on this or other issues.

Duties

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commander, U. S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM)?

The 2011 Unified Command Plan (UCP) establishes USSOUTHCOM's missions, responsibilities, and geographic area of responsibility (AOR). The latter encompasses 31 countries and 16 dependencies and areas of special sovereignty in Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. Per the UCP, the Commander of U.S. Southern Command is responsible for:

- Detecting, deterring, and preventing attacks against the United States
- Planning for and executing military operations, including detection and monitoring of the aerial and maritime transit of illicit drugs, and detention operations at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay
- Ensuring unified actions among subordinate commands
- Maintaining security of and carrying out force protection measures
- Exercising force protection responsibilities for the command
- Designating and establishing readiness requirements
- Providing trained and ready joint forces to other combatant commands
- Planning, conducting, and assessing security cooperation activities

- Planning and conducting the evacuation and protection of U.S. citizens
- Providing U.S. military representation to international and national agencies
- Providing advice and assistance to chiefs of U.S. diplomatic missions in negotiations of rights, authorizations, and facility arrangements required in support of military missions
- Providing the single point of contact on military matters within the AOR
- Assuming combatant command of security assistance organizations in the event of war or an emergency that prevents control through normal channels, or as directed
- Commanding U.S. forces conducting peace or humanitarian relief operations
- Planning for and conducting military support to stability operations, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief
- Planning for, supporting, and conducting the recovery of astronauts, space vehicles, space payloads, and objects
- Defense of the Panama Canal and Panama Canal area

What background and experience do you possess that you believe qualifies you to perform these duties?

I am honored the President nominated me to be the Commander of U.S. Southern Command. I have served in a variety of U.S. Navy, joint, and interagency assignments, including operational and staff positions in the Pentagon and National Security Council Staff, as well as tours commanding and supporting coalition forces in Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. In particular, my experience commanding U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command and U.S. 4th Fleet significantly contributed to my understanding of USSOUTHCOM's AOR. Naval forces under my command directly supported Joint Interagency Task Force South's detection and monitoring mission. Additionally, a number of assignments associated with counterterrorism policy and operations introduced me to the value of building cooperative networks to understand and target adversary networks – an approach well-suited to a number of regional security challenges in the USSOUTHCOM AOR. As the former director for Operations (J3), Joint Staff, I gained the experience and insight to direct the operations of a geographic combatant command, as well as a clear understanding of the challenges of joint force allocation and management. My current assignment as Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has given me strategic experience to understand the complexities and interdependencies of the global security environment. I have also gained a deep appreciation for the importance of cooperating with partner nations and forging international alliances. In this role I serve as the Chairman's direct liaison with the Secretary of State, and work to enhance military support to foreign policy objectives. Over the past two years I traveled extensively, building relationships with senior diplomats and Chiefs of Missions, and observing the effective execution of the diplomatic arm of national security policy. If confirmed, these collective experiences have prepared me to embrace the opportunities and meet the challenges of commanding U.S. Southern Command.

Do you believe that there are any steps that you need to take to enhance your expertise to perform the duties of the SOUTHCOM Commander?

If confirmed, I will seek insight from key leaders and experts within the Executive and Legislative branches of the U.S. government to enhance my knowledge of U.S. foreign policy objectives in USSOUTHCOM's AOR. I will also engage with military, defense, and governmental leaders of nations throughout the region to strengthen existing relationships and identify new avenues for cooperation. I will reach out to experts in academia and think tanks to better understand the evolving internal issues affecting Latin American and Caribbean security. Engagement and collaboration with law enforcement agencies will also be a focus, as will seeking new opportunities where USSOUTHCOM can amplify law enforcement activities in the region. Global security challenges are evolving rapidly and I intend to focus on how extra-hemispheric actors, as well as illegally armed non-state actors, may appear or attempt to gain influence in our hemisphere. Finally, if confirmed, I hope to build on my modest appreciation of Spanish and begin to familiarize myself with Portuguese. I firmly believe effective communication and cultural understanding are critical to successful engagements with partner nations, especially in this critical region.

Relationships

Section 162(b) of title 10, United States Code, provides that the chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the Combatant Commands. Other sections of law and traditional practice, however, establish important relationships outside the chain of command. Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander, U.S. Southern Command, to the following:

The Secretary of Defense

The Commander performs his duties under the authority, direction, and control of the Secretary of Defense, and is responsible for accomplishing the military missions directed by the President and the Secretary of Defense and for exercising command authority over the forces assigned by the Secretary of Defense.

The Deputy Secretary of Defense

The Deputy Secretary of Defense performs duties delegated by the Secretary and performs the Secretary's duties in his absence. The Commander communicates regularly with the Deputy Secretary and provides information and support necessary for the Deputy Secretary to perform these duties.

The Under Secretaries of Defense

The Commander does not have a direct command relationship with the Under Secretaries of Defense. The Commander does regularly communicate with the Under Secretaries on strategic and regional security issues as appropriate.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Chairman is the principal military advisor to the President and Secretary of Defense and serves as the key communication link between the Combatant Commanders and the President. The Vice Chairman performs the duties prescribed by the Chairman, and performs the Chairman's duties in his absence or disability. To enable the Chairman and Vice Chairman to perform their respective roles and duties, the Commander of U.S. Southern Command routinely provides information to the Chairman and Vice Chairman on significant events and issues in the Command's AOR.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and America's Security Affairs

The Commander does not have a direct command relationship with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, but regularly coordinates with the Assistant Secretary on issues related to Western Hemisphere security.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict

The Commander does not have a direct command relationship with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict, but regularly exchanges information and coordinates with the Assistant Secretary on issues of mutual concern and interest. The Assistant Secretary is responsible for many of the activities conducted every day within the U.S. Southern Command AOR, including counterterrorism, information operations, the Department of Defense counternarcotics program, building partnership capacity initiatives, and humanitarian and disaster relief efforts.

The Service Secretaries and Service Chiefs

The Service Secretaries are responsible for administration and support to the forces assigned to the combatant commands. The Service Chiefs are responsible for organizing, training, and equipping forces in their respective departments for assignment to the Combatant Commands. The Commander does not have a direct command relationship with the Service Secretaries and Service Chiefs, but regularly communicates with and coordinates on issues of mutual concern and interest, working closely with them to understand service capabilities, convey combatant command requirements, and effectively employ service capabilities to successfully conduct U.S. Southern Command's mission.

The other Combatant Commanders, particularly U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM)

The Commander, U.S. Southern Command, maintains an exceptionally close relationship with other Combatant Commanders, especially with the Commander of U.S. Northern Command. The Combatant Commanders are in frequent communication, maintaining a shared perspective on trans-regional threats, coordinating on issues of mutual concern, sharing information, and preventing or removing any gaps or seams along regional boundaries. When directed or specified by the Secretary of Defense, the relationship between Combatant Commanders becomes formalized in order to plan and execute specific operational plans.

U. S. Chiefs of Mission within the U. S. Southern Command area of responsibility (AOR)

The Commander does not have a formal relationship with the Chiefs of Mission. The U.S. Ambassador is responsible for directing and supervising all U.S. government activity in the host nation, with the exception of U.S. military activities under the direction and coordination of the Combatant Commander. However, Geographic Combatant Commanders routinely discuss issues of mutual interest and concern with the Chiefs of Mission in the Command's AOR and coordinate security cooperation activities with the Chief of Mission and country team. The Combatant Commanders negotiate force protection arrangements with the Chiefs of Mission as appropriate. If confirmed, I intend to maintain close coordination and contact with the Chiefs of Mission throughout the U.S. Southern Command AOR, working together to execute our mutual responsibilities to achieve our shared national security objectives. I will continue to host annual sub-regional conferences with the Chiefs of Mission to exchange perspectives and gain regional insight.

Major Challenges

If confirmed as the Commander of the U.S. Southern Command, you will be responsible for all military operations in that region. These include operations supporting homeland defense and security, counter-narcotics efforts in source and transit countries, responses to natural disasters, detainee operations at Guantanamo Bay, and the development of democratic values within the militaries of the region, among others.

In your view, what are the major challenges and problems you would confront if confirmed as the next Commander of SOUTHCOM?

Today, no nation in the region poses a direct, credible conventional military threat to the United States. Although there are many longstanding border disputes, there is minimal risk of inter-state armed conflict between neighboring countries. As I understand it, Latin America and the Caribbean has witnessed significant progress—especially in terms of democratic consolidation; the growth of market-based economies; and the protection of human rights—however the region still faces numerous persistent unresolved challenges.

Many countries face economic and social challenges, institutional problems, and malicious activities by non-state actors. These challenges are inter-related. Pervasive inequality, chronic unemployment, lack of economic opportunities, and deteriorating citizen security drive migration and propel young men and women to join violent criminal gangs, as well as set the conditions for radicalization within the region's small Muslim communities. Lack of state presence, ineffective governance, and weak rule of law provide fertile ground for the drug trade and spread of powerful criminal networks; these networks, coupled with criminal violence, threaten political, financial, and security institutions and jeopardize the stability of some partner nations. In certain countries there is a troubling trend toward authoritarianism: elected leaders that shun democratic standards, abuse human rights, muzzle the press, and suppress opposition. Public frustration

with endemic corruption feeds social protests and, in the case of Guatemala, can even bring down a sitting president. Environmental disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, and drought loom as ever-present dangers.

Finally, in recent years, growing competition for regional influence by nations like China, Russia, and Iran present challenges to our aim to broaden security cooperation within and across the region.

If confirmed, what plans do you have for addressing these challenges and problems?

If confirmed, I will defend the southern approaches to the United States and work with partners in the U.S. government and the region to advance security, prosperity, and stability in the Western Hemisphere. Given U.S. Southern Command's minimal force allocation, I will maximize the use of all available resources, explore innovative opportunities, and leverage the full spectrum of relationships and partnerships to best mitigate risks.

I will prioritize the development of creative and non-traditional approaches—including the use of alternative platforms to support DoD's detection and monitoring mission—and facilitate improved information sharing with partner nations. As appropriate, I will encourage bilateral and multilateral training, security cooperation activities, and exercises to strengthen defense cooperation; build partner nation capacity; encourage increased responsibility and global leadership; and advance common interests and values. I will emphasize the ability to rapidly and effectively respond to contingencies in concert with partner nations, the interagency, and private organizations. I will ensure U.S. Southern Command remains vigilant against the threat of terrorism and violent extremism by working closely with our partners to monitor and if necessary deter terrorist threats to the U.S. homeland or our partner nations. Finally, I will continue to ensure the safe, humane, and legal treatment of detainees at Joint Task Force Guantanamo.

Building Partner Capacity

In the past few years, Congress has provided DoD a number of temporary and permanent authorities to build the capacity of partner nations' security forces and institutions.

In your view, what should be our strategic objectives in building the capacities of partner nations in the SOUTHCOM AOR?

In my view, the strategic objectives of building partner capacity (BPC) are to increase the capability of partner militaries to address threats within their own territories; to foster regional cooperation among and between partner nations; and to promote a peaceful, cooperative international order. Probably to a greater degree than other Geographic Combatant Commands, U.S. Southern Command relies heavily on BPC activities to help generate a layered defense of the U.S. homeland. These activities cultivate capable partners who are willing and able to work cooperatively to confront shared security challenges. Appropriate BPC efforts in the

USSOUTHCOM AOR should focus on improving regional domain awareness and information sharing; the ability of partner nations to support ‘end game’ interdiction operations; and the continued professionalization of regional defense forces.

In your view, are existing authorities and resourcing sufficient to meet these strategic objectives?

In my view, maintaining current authorities to conduct BPC and DoD security cooperation activities will be critical to meeting these strategic objectives. The role of the Congress in supporting DoD by granting the flexibility to address emerging threats will also be key to the continued success of our efforts. USSOUTHCOM has long operated as an economy-of-force command, receiving minimal force allocation and resources. This has forced the Command to accept risk in many of its missions. If confirmed, I will assess strategic and readiness risks across the spectrum of USSOUTHCOM missions and work to mitigate them to the extent possible.

Are there ways in which existing authorities could be reformed to more effectively and efficiently respond to requirements in the SOUTHCOM AOR?

I know that the Congress recently recognized transnational organized crime as an increasing threat to national security and granted the Department greater flexibility to address this challenge. This type of support—which helps DoD address an adaptive adversary—is critical to defending the homeland. If confirmed, I will assess the threat environment to ensure I have the flexibility I need to address evolving challenges, especially when it comes to missions like countering transnational organized crime and counterterrorism, and will keep the Congress informed of any necessary or recommended authority changes.

In your view, what is the appropriate balance between efforts to build partnership capacity at the tactical and operational level and at the institutional and ministerial-level?

I believe these efforts should be executed in tandem. As I understand it, U.S. Southern Command focuses on building the tactical and operational capacity of regional defense and security forces. USSOUTHCOM also works closely with organizations and programs like the William J. Perry Center and the Defense Institution Reform Initiative (DIRI) to promote good governance and accountability, and strengthen strategic planning and budgeting processes at the ministerial level.

Do you believe the ability of a partner nation to sustain U.S.-provided equipment and capabilities should be a key factor in determining the level and type of assistance to be provided?

Absolutely. As I understand it, U.S. Southern Command works closely with partner nations to provide appropriate equipment and sustainment training tailored to each individual nation’s needs and abilities. The United States strives to be the partner of choice to countries around the

world, and to do so we must be *responsive* partners. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the United States remains the region's security partner of choice.

Use of Military Forces for Civilian Law Enforcement

Throughout the Western Hemisphere there is increased use of militaries to conduct policing and public security roles.

What is your assessment of this trend? In your view, are these permanent shifts or temporary measures taken while the capabilities of police forces are improved?

As I understand it, in the face of rising crime and violent insecurity and within the constraints of their own national laws, some democratic governments in the region have resorted to deploying their militaries to support overwhelmed, outgunned, and at times corrupt police forces. In many countries, the military is among the most trusted institutions, and public opinion polls show that many of the region's citizens support the use of the military in domestic security functions. I believe these are and should be temporary measures that are taken while civilian police forces are improved and the judicial sector is strengthened. This will not happen overnight, however—and until then, we should remain supportive as regional militaries fill this critical capability gap.

In your view, what are the benefits and risks of militaries taking on more public-security tasks?

Civilian leaders in the region are doing their best to improve citizen security. However, as militaries take on more public security tasks, there is potential risk for human rights violations or increased corruption in the military ranks. I understand that U.S. Southern Command has a robust Human Rights Initiative. This program promotes respect for human rights and subordination to civilian authority among the region's military and defense forces. If confirmed, I will emphasize the importance of human rights. I will also support and encourage partner nations as they transition domestic security missions back to civilian police forces.

DoD Counter-narcotics Activities

DoD serves as the single lead agency for the detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime foreign shipments of drugs flowing toward the U.S. On an annual basis, DoD's counter-narcotics (CN) program expends approximately \$1.0 billion to support the Department's CN operations, including to build the capacity of U.S. Federal, State, and local law enforcement agencies, and certain foreign governments, and provide intelligence support on CN-related matters and a variety of other unique enabling capabilities. Much of this funding is directed towards the SOUTHCOM AOR.

In your view, what is the appropriate role of DoD – and by extension SOUTHCOM – in U.S. counterdrug efforts?

I believe the Department's current role is appropriate and a good use of DoD's unique capabilities. By law, the Department of Defense is the lead federal agency for detection and monitoring of aerial and maritime transit of illicit drugs into the United States. In this role, the Department supports the U.S. Coast Guard and other U.S. law enforcement agencies that are engaged in interdiction and apprehension activities. U.S. Southern Command accomplishes this mission through its component Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF South). U.S. Southern Command also works to build the capacities of partner nation militaries to conduct successful detection, monitoring, and interdiction operations in support of U.S. and partner nation law enforcement efforts. These efforts complement other U.S. counterdrug programs, such as the Department of State's eradication and alternative economic development programs and the Drug Enforcement Agency's arrest, extradition, and prosecution of illicit traffickers. In its supporting role, DoD must consider a much broader perspective than simply supporting the disruption of illicit drugs. We must take a network perspective – understanding the entire value chain and its facilitation of other transnational threats. It is not enough to see and stop the drug flow; we must understand the adaptive networks that direct and support this flow if we hope to have more of an impact.

How would you measure the effectiveness of U.S. and DoD counter-narcotics programs?

Rather than saying effective, I believe Department of Defense counternarcotics programs get positive results from very limited resources. As I understand it, in FY2015 JIATF South's Operation MARTILLO resulted in the disruption of 192 metric tons of cocaine destined for the United States. This success would not have been possible without significant contributions by partner nations and Allies, who helped disrupt 108 metric tons of cocaine. Every year, JIATF South and its international partners disrupt approximately three times the amount of cocaine seized at or within U.S. borders—while receiving only 1.7% of the total U.S. counterdrug budget. Apart from measuring cocaine seizures, I also believe it is important to look at the impact of U.S. counternarcotics programs on partner nations, especially in terms of stability, citizen security, and the capability of military and security forces to successfully support and conduct counterdrug operations. I am aware of the significant and growing number of drug related deaths in the United States. Our national strategy places great emphasis on the demand side of the equation, while DoD counternarcotics programs contribute primarily to the supply side. We will explore how we might do more, in creative and innovative combinations.

In your view, what should be the role of the U.S. in countering the flow of narcotics to nations other than the U.S.?

Regardless of destination, the flow of narcotics leaves a trail of corruption, violence, death, and large sums of money that fund nefarious activities and destabilizes entire regions. As the world's principal consumer of cocaine, the United States has a responsibility to help our partners address

this challenge. In my view, the U.S. should work to build the capacity of partner nations to counter illicit trafficking, both individually and collectively, in the maritime, air, and land domains. Given that the globalized illicit economy supports a diverse network of organized crime groups, extremist organizations, and terrorists, we have a responsibility to aggressively share information with other nations, especially as it relates to international security. If confirmed, I will seek ways to increase JIATF South's current information sharing authorities, and enhance U.S. Southern Command's efforts to build partner nation capacity.

Heroin

General John Kelly, Commander of U.S. Southern Command, testified before the Armed Services Committee on March 12, 2015 that “we are in the middle of a serious epidemic, in -- particularly when it comes to heroin.” General Kelly went on to note that “100 percent of it is produced...in the Latin America. About half of it is produced in Mexico, and the rest of it is produced further south in various parts of the Central American isthmus and South America.”

What is your assessment of the threat posed by the trafficking of heroin into the United States from Mexico, Central and South America?

The threat posed by heroin in the United States is serious. While U.S. demand for cocaine has been decreasing over the past few years, demand for heroin has more than doubled since 2007. In response, criminal organizations have ramped up heroin production in Mexico, Colombia, and Guatemala. Heroin is available in larger quantities, used by a larger number of people, and is causing an increasing number of overdose deaths. I have been told that Mexican transnational criminal organizations control drug trafficking across the Southwest Border and are moving to expand their share of US illicit drug markets, particularly heroin markets.

What more should be done to combat what General Kelly has deemed a “serious epidemic?”

Given the nature of how heroin is produced and smuggled in the USSOUTHCOM AOR, I believe the most effective way to address this threat is to focus on building the capacity of regional partners to detect and illuminate the criminal networks engaged in this activity, and to interdict the flow of dangerous drugs like heroin and methamphetamine as close to the point of origin as possible. Because heroin is often smuggled in small quantities via established smuggling routes, it is extremely difficult to intercept it once it is en route. We have significant experience leading coalition efforts that build networks to defeat networks; in this case we can work with our interagency and regional partners to dismantle transnational criminal organizations.

Countering Transnational Organized Crime

Criminal networks are not only expanding their operations, but they are also diversifying their activities, resulting in a convergence of transnational threats that has evolved to become more complex, volatile, and destabilizing.

What is your assessment of the threat to the United States posed by transnational organized crime?

In my opinion, transnational organized crime (TOC) poses a significant and growing threat to U.S. national security. TOC networks operate with blatant disregard for national sovereignty, the rule of law, and citizen security. These sophisticated and dangerous criminal networks generate enormous revenue, particularly from the trafficking of illegal drugs, and cause significant damage to the environments in which they operate. Exploiting technological developments, TOC networks have expanded and their illicit operations threaten the security of citizens and the stability of some political and economic institutions. In the Western Hemisphere TOC networks fuel corruption and exploit insufficient state presence and weak rule of law. We have no indications of this in the USSOUTHCOM AOR, though the potential exists for terrorist organizations to work with TOC networks to transport special interest aliens, terrorists, or weapons of mass destruction into the United States.

What is your understanding of the President's July 2011 strategy to combat transnational criminal organizations?

As I understand it, the President's strategy aims to build, balance, and integrate all the tools of American power to combat transnational organized crime and related threats to U.S. national security to ensure the threat is degraded to a public safety problem manageable by partner nation law enforcement organizations.

What kind of additional support, if any, would you envision DOD – and SOUTHCOM in particular – providing to U.S. law enforcement to combat transnational organized crime?

The primary ways TOC will be addressed are through law enforcement capacity building efforts, adroit diplomacy with partner nations, and the use of innovative policy tools such as counter threat finance capabilities to break the financial back of criminal networks. DoD will rarely be the lead agency in efforts to combat TOC, except where activities fall into unique DoD capability areas (i.e. detection and monitoring and supporting interdiction operations). USSOUTHCOM supports the broader U.S. government effort through detection and monitoring operations; support to U.S. and partner nation law enforcement operations; and by building the security capabilities of vetted partner military units through counternarcotics training, equipping, and infrastructure support. DOD can also assist law enforcement efforts through the development of comprehensive intelligence. Our unique DoD capabilities and experience working across the interagency can and should be applied to TOC. DOD can support law enforcement organizations

by working in close collaboration to illuminate, characterize, and understand the organization, function, and vulnerabilities of criminal networks. I envision a more comprehensive effort to gather and integrate disparate knowledge from across the US government - law enforcement organizations, DOD, the intelligence community, and open source information - to paint a broader picture of this agile adversary and how they respond to our efforts. Working directly with Chiefs of Mission and country teams, we can also help our partners more effectively enforce the rule of law.

Central American Security Strategy

The President announced on January 29, 2015 a strategy entitled Promoting Prosperity, Security and Good Governance in Central America, principally focused on promoting enhanced trade, security, and governance in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras – the so-called Northern Triangle.

What is your understanding of the President’s Central America strategy?

As I understand it, the Strategy for U.S. Engagement in Central America broadens the vision for how we achieve security in the sub-region. The Strategy prioritizes three interconnected objectives: prosperity, governance, and security. It outlines how the United States will work with international organizations and regional governments to put the region on a course to sustained, broad-based economic growth, better government performance, and improved security conditions

How do you envision SOUTHCOM’s activities in the region complementing the President’s strategy?

Although DoD is not the focus of the strategy nor the recipient of the additional funding requested by the President, Congress recognized the important role security plays in addressing the region’s long-standing challenges and provided additional funding towards that end, increasing USSOUTHCOM’s capacity to complement the President’s strategy.

U.S. Southern Command’s efforts to build the capacity of the Central American security forces—as well as its Title X responsibility to detect and monitor the aerial and maritime transit of illicit drugs—directly support the President’s vision of a more secure and stable Central America. If confirmed, I will ensure USSOUTHCOM activities focus on helping partner nations secure their borders; gain domain awareness; disrupt illicit trafficking and transnational criminal networks; maintain professional security forces that respect human rights and uphold the rule of law; and build stronger defense institutions.

Counter Threat Finance

What are your views on the role of DoD in counter threat finance activities?

In accordance with the Department of Defense Directive 5205.14 on counter threat finance policy, the Department of Defense should use its unique capabilities, such as network analysis, to support the interagency and work with partner nations to deny, disrupt, and degrade the ability of adversaries to use global and illicit financial networks to negatively affect U.S. interests.

What do you believe is the appropriate role, if any, of SOUTHCOM in supporting counter threat finance activities?

I do believe that USSOUTHCOM has an appropriate role supporting counter threat finance activities with its unique capabilities. Finance is an important layer of network activity. If we are to understand criminal networks and more effectively counter them – we must integrate our understanding of finance, logistics, leadership, and other layers of the network into a more holistic understanding. For example, in support of the Department of the Treasury, U.S. Southern Command recently stood up a Counter Threat Finance Branch that helps map illicit networks, conducts all-source intelligence analysis and production, and works with U.S. and regional partners to support targeted financial measures and U.S. law enforcement efforts. These efforts enhance the U.S. and partner nation efforts to disrupt the global illicit economy and combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

Mexico

Much of the illegal narcotics supply comes into Mexico from the SOUTHCOM AOR. While Mexico is in the U.S. Northern Command AOR, the rest of Latin America is in the SOUTHCOM AOR.

What is your vision of how SOUTHCOM and NORTHCOM should work together in a fully coordinated effort with respect to Mexico and other security challenges?

I am told that the staffs of U.S. Southern Command and U.S. Northern Command regularly collaborate on issues related to the Mexico-Guatemala-Belize border to eliminate any seam that might pose a weakness in the forward defense of the Homeland. Also, the Joint Operating Area for JIATF South was purposefully designed to overlap both commands' areas of responsibility to remove any boundaries in the air and maritime arenas. I understand that there is a Mexican liaison officer at JIATF South, and that the staffs of both commands are in constant communication, participate in exercises, and attend regional conferences, which often includes attendance by Mexican officials.

If confirmed, I will aggressively support this coordination and seek additional ways to foster collaboration between the Mexican and Central American militaries to encourage cooperation on shared security challenges, including illicit trafficking, transnational organized crime, and illegal migration.

Terrorism Threat

General John Kelly, in testimony before the Armed Services Committee on March 12, 2015, noted concern that the “relative ease with which human smugglers moved tens of thousands of people to our nation’s doorstep also serves as another warning sign: these smuggling routes are a potential vulnerability to our homeland. As I stated last year, terrorist organizations could seek to leverage those same smuggling routes to move operatives with intent to cause grave harm to our citizens or even bring weapons of mass destruction into the United States.”

Do you share General Kelly’s concern about the potential for terrorist organizations to exploit smuggling routes into the United States for nefarious purposes?

Yes, I do share General Kelly’s concern. Drugs are but one manifestation of the overall problem of illicit trafficking. The overarching threat to our national security—of which drugs are *one* part—is the range of illicit commodities and traffickers, including those that facilitate the movement of ‘special interest aliens’ (SIAs) from countries such as Syria, Pakistan, and Iran. There is a risk that terrorist organizations could exploit SIA networks, established smuggling routes, or other regional vulnerabilities—including lax immigration and border security, corrupt government officials, or the capabilities of criminal organizations—to move terrorists into the United States or into the region.

I am also deeply concerned by the proven threat posed by foreign fighters. I understand there has been a small but steady stream of individuals and their families leaving the region to join ISIL in Syria or Iraq. This is especially concerning considering that many partner nations are unable to monitor the potential return of foreign fighters and often lack robust counterterrorism legislation to address this threat.

What should SOUTHCOM do in order to counter this threat?

I believe USSOUTHCOM must continue collaborating closely and aggressively with its interagency, regional, and international partners—as well as providing intelligence support to regional U.S. Country Teams and interagency operations—to ensure our nation and those of our friends remain secure. If confirmed, I will also work tirelessly to ensure U.S. Southern Command develops, maintains, and aggressively employs the required intelligence capabilities to identify, monitor, and deter threats to the U.S. homeland or partner nations.

Interagency Collaboration

What is your assessment of the current level of coordination between DoD and civilian agencies in SOUTHCOM’s AOR?

USSOUTHCOM plays an enormously important role as an enabling platform for interagency operations and activities across the region. There are more than 30 interagency representatives

integrated into the headquarters staff, allowing U.S. Southern Command to marshal in-house expertise to align military engagement activities within interagency frameworks, programs, and activities. USSOUTHCOM's Security Cooperation Organizations—mostly co-located in U.S. Embassies across the region—work side-by-side with civilian U.S. agencies to ensure seamless execution of U.S. security policies within each host nation. I understand there is also routine discussion and coordination between senior leaders from U.S. Southern Command, the United States Agency for International Development, and the Department of State Bureaus of Western Hemisphere Affairs and International Narcotics and Law Enforcement.

If confirmed, how would you work to ensure that DoD efforts in your AOR complement the efforts of civilian agencies?

I firmly believe that seamless interagency coordination and execution is critical to effective and efficient U.S. security and foreign policy. If confirmed, I will continue to strengthen this coordination. I will also conduct periodic assessments of U.S. Southern Command's activities to identify areas for improving synchronization of efforts between U.S. Southern Command and civilian agencies, while also engaging with counterparts at the Department of State and other interagency entities to identify new opportunities for collaboration.

Cuba

In light of the Administration's rapprochement with the government of Cuba, what is your view of the need to review and, potentially, revise U. S. policies regarding security cooperation with Cuba?

As I understand it, the United States and Cuba have cooperated on anti-drug efforts for over a decade, with a U.S. Coast Guard Drug Interdiction Specialist stationed at the U.S. Embassy in Havana. Coast Guard officials have also engaged with Cuban officials regarding oil spill prevention, planning, and response issues under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

U.S. military engagement with the Cuban military is currently restricted under U.S. policy. In compliance with all applicable US polices and laws, I understand DoD is exploring avenues for cooperation with Cuba on shared interests like humanitarian and medical issues, disaster relief, and limited exercise and conference attendance. Currently, the monthly fence line meeting with the Cuban Army Frontier Brigade is one of the few direct channels to Cuba's military.

What is your opinion about the pros and cons of military-to-military contact with Cuba?

Given that Cuba's military and security forces have long regarded the United States as its greatest threat to national security and are antagonistic to the presence of the U.S. Naval Station in Guantanamo Bay, the Cuban government will likely be hesitant to engage in high-profile military-to-military engagements, preferring low-level interaction on medical and humanitarian

issues. An example of such engagement is when Cuban medics joined U.S. personnel from the USNS COMFORT to provide medical care at a hospital in Haiti earlier this year.

Any military-to-military engagement plan must be developed within a larger, comprehensive U.S. Government engagement strategy that leverages all efforts to achieve U.S. national objectives; namely a stable, prosperous, and democratic Cuba. In general, based on our proven track record improving partner nations' military professionalism and respect for human rights, I believe engagement by our U.S. military could positively influence democratic governance, nurture and develop professional defense forces, and encourage greater regional cooperation. While normalization of relations opens up new avenues of cooperation, the U.S. military will not work with anyone who is not vetted or does not respect human rights. So if a decision is taken to change U.S. policy toward Cuba, mil-to-mil engagement may provide opportunities to improve conditions for the Cuban people.

Venezuela

U. S. -Venezuelan relations have continued to be strained as President Maduro continues to propagate anti-American rhetoric, import increasing amounts of military armament, politicize the Venezuelan military forces, traffic illegal narcotics throughout the region, and export his brand of populism to the region.

What is your view of President Maduro's intentions in the region?

President Maduro publicly expresses his opposition to the United States, regularly criticizing the U.S. government, its policies, and its relations with Latin America.

What is your understanding of the current state of military-to-military relations between the U. S. and Venezuela?

My understanding is that military-to-military relations with Venezuela are minimal, despite U.S. Southern Command's efforts to maintain interaction and dialogue with the Venezuelan military. U.S. Southern Command invites Venezuelan military personnel to international and regional military forums, but they simply do not show up. JIATF South maintains an open position for a Venezuelan liaison officer; however, for several years, Venezuela has chosen to leave the position unfilled. If confirmed, I will continue to seek engagement opportunities with the Venezuelan military, in accordance with U.S. policy.

How would you assess Venezuelan relations with China, Cuba, Iran, and Russia vis-à-vis the national interests of the United States?

Venezuela has strengthened its bilateral ties with Cuba, China, Iran, and Russia over the past few years, although it appears President Maduro does not have the strong personal ties his predecessor had with the leaders of those countries. If confirmed, I will monitor developments

in Venezuelan foreign relations closely, particularly as they relate to U.S. national security interests.

What is your understanding of the extent to which Venezuelan government or military forces are involved in the drug trade?

My understanding is that there are widespread allegations of Venezuelan government and military involvement in the drug trade, and that various government officials have been sanctioned under the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Act.

What is your assessment of the impact of Venezuela's deteriorating economic situation on the stability of the government and its relationship with the broader region?

As I understand it, Venezuela faces domestic economic challenges. Regionally, Venezuela's long-running border and maritime territorial disputes with its neighbors Guyana and Colombia continue. It is also a major drug transshipment point that fails to engage in consistent, strategic, and broad cooperation with international counter narcotics efforts.

Brazil

What is your understanding of Brazil's security role in South America and the broader region?

As I understand it, Brazil seeks to take a greater global leadership role, particularly on issues related to maritime security and peacekeeping operations. Brazil has deployed security forces to its borders to address illicit trafficking and criminal activity. It is also an active contributor to regional and international peacekeeping and stability efforts, including leading the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti.

How would you assess U.S.-Brazil security cooperation?

As I understand it, the U.S. and Brazilian militaries cooperate on a number of issues, including counternarcotics, counterterrorism, disaster preparedness, humanitarian assistance, and aviation and port security. As the two largest democracies and economies in the Western Hemisphere, the United States and Brazil are natural partners, and both countries have committed to deepening security cooperation efforts.

If confirmed, how might bilateral security coordination be improved?

As I understand it, the United States-Brazil Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) and General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) will strengthen bilateral defense relations and enable greater cooperation between the United States and Brazil in defense-related matters, especially research and development, commercial initiatives, logistics support, technology security, and the acquisition and development of defense products and services. If

confirmed, I will look to advance cooperation in these areas, focusing on joint exercises and the exchange of information and equipment, especially to improve the conduct of international peacekeeping operations.

Panama

What is your assessment of U.S.-Panamanian security cooperation, particularly in the area of counter-narcotics efforts?

My understanding is that U.S.-Panama security cooperation is extremely close. The United States enjoys a strong partnership with all Panamanian security services and Panama actively cooperates with the U.S. on counternarcotics efforts, to include supporting U.S. Coast Guard maritime operations; responding to interdiction cues from JIATF South; and collaborating with the Drug Enforcement Administration. Panama is a strong supporter of Operation MARTILLO, a multinational counter illicit trafficking operation to disrupt organized crime groups by limiting their ability to use Central America as a transit zone. Additionally, Panama's commitment to the security of the Canal has been exemplary, as shown by Panama's 2013 interdiction of the Motor Vessel Chong Chon Gang and its cooperation with the United Nations to determine if sanctions violations occurred.

Ecuador

How would you characterize the current status of counter-narcotics cooperation between the United States and the government of Ecuador?

As I understand it, the Ecuadorian government's closure of the U.S. Embassy's Office of Security Cooperation in April 2014 greatly reduced bilateral counternarcotics collaboration. Despite this setback, the United States continues to support Ecuador's security forces in limited ways. Ecuador participates in the annual U.S. Coast Guard-sponsored Multilateral Counterdrug Summit, which enhances bilateral cooperation in combating maritime drug trafficking and improving prosecution of maritime trafficking cases. While the closure of the Office of Security Cooperation certainly complicates military-to-military engagement and security cooperation between our two countries, the United States remains open to mutually beneficial engagement opportunities in the future.

SOUTHCOM's Military Service Component Commands

Like all of the Combatant Commands, SOUTHCOM has military service component commands that implement the plans and policies of the Combatant Commander. Each of the component commands also have responsibility to the Services they represent. It seems SOUTHCOM, however, exercises limited command and control in directing specific activities and limited oversight of the activities of the component commands.

If confirmed, will you review the command and control relationship and share your findings with the committee?

Yes, I will.

SOUTHCOM does not have any assigned forces and – as a result – is required to compete for forces within the global request for forces process. Given the Department’s focus on the greater Middle East and Asia-Pacific, do you believe the SOUTHCOM Commander will be able to secure the necessary personnel to accomplish its partnering and engagement mission within its AOR? If not, how would you assess the risk to U.S. strategic interests in the region?

U.S. Southern Command has long operated as an economy-of-force command. Persistent ISR shortfalls negatively impact the Command’s ability to monitor threat networks in the region and to identify indicators and warnings for potential crises. With regard to forces, even a small change in force allocation makes an enormous difference in the Command’s ability to engage with partner nations and ensure a defense in depth of the homeland. If confirmed, I will advocate aggressively to ensure that USSOUTHCOM’s requirements are adequately sourced. I will also seek innovative alternatives to traditional force sourcing solutions.

Acquisition

Do you feel that the military services are responsive to SOUTHCOM requirements when prioritizing resources for acquisition programs, for example, with respect to drug interdiction platforms?

Given global defense priorities, the Services do their best to be responsive and source USSOUTHCOM requirements. While the U.S. Navy has competing requirements, the U.S. Coast Guard has committed a 50% increase in cutters equipped with a helicopter flight deck, plus a commensurate plus-up in maritime patrol aircraft hours to support JIATF South’s detection and monitoring mission. To help mitigate shortfalls, I understand that USSOUTHCOM also makes good use of a variety of innovative approaches, like adapting anti-IED technology for use in counterdrug operations in dense jungle and mountainous terrain.

Would SOUTHCOM missions benefit from its own dedicated acquisition budget and authority, especially for rapid acquisition and deployment of new capabilities?

From my understanding of USSOUTHCOM’s current organizational construct, changes of this nature would require the creation of a new acquisition branch and the hiring of additional personnel. Currently, I do not believe that USSOUTHCOM would be able to manage changes of this nature. However, if confirmed, I can examine that possibility and report back to the Committee if I believe such a change would be beneficial.

Colombia

Plan Colombia has demonstrated that a multi-year, sustained partnership can achieve significant and lasting results in the area of security cooperation. Plan Colombia has enabled the Colombian government to make significant gains against the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) and other paramilitary forces in Colombia, as well as enabled the government to secure many previously ungoverned areas.

What is your assessment of the current security situation in Colombia?

Thanks to our sustained assistance and their political will, Colombia has been transformed from a near failed state into a major regional player exercising significant political influence, including South America's most professional security forces, and a dynamic economy. In a little over a decade, homicide and kidnapping rates have plummeted and terrorist attacks are down 50%. The number of FARC combatants has been reduced from ~22,000 in 2002 to fewer than 8,000 today. The FARC is profoundly unpopular, routinely polling at about 3% domestic popular support. Colombia now sets the standard for hemispheric law enforcement and counternarcotics efforts, and now exports its security expertise to other countries in the region.

Although Colombia's transformation is remarkable, they will still face a violent period with many challenges even if a peace deal is reached. For Colombia to successfully consolidate the promise of this decades long struggle, the United States *must* remain a fully engaged post-peace accord partner.

What lessons should be drawn from Plan Colombia to inform building partner capacity efforts elsewhere in the SOUTHCOM AOR and beyond?

We can learn a lot from the Colombian experience. We should look to Colombia, not just for examples of where we got it right, but where they did, and why. Colombia had effective core institutions, a strong sense of national identity, and a commitment to a market economy, institutional democracy, and fundamental freedoms. Most importantly, after the struggles of the 1990s, Colombia's leaders possessed one thing that is *indispensable* to the success of security assistance: tenacious political will. They came up with their own plan (*Plan Colombia*)—what they called a 'Colombian solution to a Colombian problem'—that involved modernization and professionalization of their Armed Forces, respect for human rights, and welcoming U.S. training and intelligence support with open arms. Policy continuity over successive Colombian administrations was also a key factor and, again, a reflection of their enduring commitment to a goal we shared. This goal was not just shared by the Colombians; bipartisan support in the U.S. Congress and a 'whole of U.S. government' approach was also instrumental to Plan Colombia's success. While the U.S. has spent approximately \$10 billion to train the Colombian military and support the Colombian government, the Colombians outspent us by a significant margin.

How should U.S. security cooperation programs and activities evolve as the security situation in Colombia continues to improve?

Although Colombia's economic and security transformation is remarkable, the proliferation of weapons and criminal organizations and the potential for violent competition after the FARC demobilizes will continue to pose significant challenges. Colombia's topography, jungles, and difficult terrain will complicate efforts to consolidate state institutions and extend government presence into remote areas once run by the FARC.

Continued U.S. engagement will be critical to ensure Colombia can consolidate the success it has achieved over the past 15 years. In addition to continued counterdrug cooperation, I understand that U.S. Southern Command is supporting the Colombian military's modernization and transformation efforts as they prepare for a new, post-peace accord role that is more outwardly focused on international missions such as peacekeeping.

What programs should continue in order to ensure that the progress that has been made is sustained?

Current programs such as Civil Military Support Elements and Information Operations will be critical to supporting the Government of Colombia's efforts to extend state influence and security throughout all parts of the country. Military cooperation will remain essential to maintain and expand on hard-fought security gains and manage emergent security concerns. Given the government's focus on implementing its new counternarcotics strategy, USOUTHCOM will need to remain focused in this area, while also expanding training for international peacekeeping operations.

How do you envision the U.S. security cooperation programs and activities evolving in the event of a successful outcome of the Colombian—FARC peace negotiations?

As Colombia nears the end of a 51-year conflict, now is the time to position the United States, Colombia's leading ally, to support successful implementation of a peace agreement. Consolidation of the gains achieved to date and establishment of state authority throughout its sovereign territory will require sustained effort for years to come. Continued targeted assistance will be essential to the Colombian government as it begins peace implementation, helping reassure the Colombian public of the benefits of a peace agreement and the strength of our bilateral partnership. Such assistance will also help build the conditions for a just and durable peace.

The Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) process will likely be a long-term endeavor that will require U.S. assistance on a range of issues. Immediate support to this process would likely include planning and logistical assistance, as well as support in constructing zones for demobilized guerillas and demining efforts. The movement of the FARC to DDR zones will likely create vacuums that need to be filled by the effective presence of the state – and there will no doubt be an important security component to this. I also believe the U.S. military should

continue its core support to Colombia as it combats cocaine cultivation, production, and trafficking and fights transnational organized crime.

How would you approach the issue of respect for human rights in the Colombian military?

If confirmed, I will maintain the U.S. Southern Command's Human Rights Initiative and ensure that respect for human rights continues to be a key element of the U.S. military's engagement with Colombia.

Colombia has demonstrated a willingness to become more involved internationally, to include increased engagements with regional partners, signing a Cooperation and Security of Information Agreement with NATO in 2013, and President Santos' announcement at the United Nations General Assembly meeting in September 2015 that his country would contribute 5,000 personnel to U.N. international peacekeeping missions over the next three years.

What are your views on these developments?

This demonstrates a significant return on our investment. A prospering Colombia at peace has the potential to be a global partner on security, democracy, and trade issues. In the security realm, Colombia has one of the most capable militaries in the region and is the region's premiere 'security exporter,' sharing counterterrorism and counternarcotics expertise with Central America, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. They are also contributing to international security efforts; the Colombian Navy currently has a ship off the coast of Somalia protecting World Food Programme shipments (in support of NATO's anti-piracy operation OCEAN SHIELD).

In what ways should SOUTHCOM assist Colombia in its efforts to assume a greater role internationally?

As the Colombian military carefully plans its transition to a post-peace accord role, USSOUTHCOM can assist with planning and other efforts, as well as expanding activities that support the U.S.-Colombia Action Plan on Regional Security Cooperation. I think USSOUTHCOM can also contribute to Colombia's plan to transform its military force by providing training in missions such as peacekeeping operations, as well as support the Colombian military's long-term modernization and self-sufficiency.

Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation

The Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC), which replaced the School of the Americas in 2001, has the mission of contributing to theater cooperation activities through the education and training of students in the Western Hemisphere from Canada to Chile.

What is the relationship between SOUTHCOM and WHINSEC?

WHINSEC does not fall under U.S. Southern Command's command authority, but it is one of many valuable tools available to strengthen military-to-military relations in the region. I also understand the Commander of U.S. Southern Command is a member of WHINSEC's Board of Visitors. If confirmed, I look forward to joining this distinguished group.

In your view, does WHINSEC promote the national security interests of the United States in the Western Hemisphere?

DoD educational institutions like WHINSEC provide professional education, and training opportunities to eligible personnel within the context of the democratic principles set forth in the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS), while fostering confidence and cooperation among the participating nations, and promoting democratic values and respect for human rights. Instilling these principles in partner nation militaries absolutely enhances the national security of the United States.

In your view, what more – if anything – does WHINSEC need to do to emphasize human rights in its curriculum?

From what I understand, WHINSEC has a very comprehensive human rights curriculum in place. USSOUTHCOM's Human Rights Office does not have the capacity to directly plan and execute human rights training to partner nation militaries. Instead the office depends upon third parties like WHINSEC to plan and conduct the training. If confirmed, I will continue to monitor and assess the human rights curriculum and will stress the value of WHINSEC attendance for personnel from regional militaries and security forces.

Will you attend the regularly scheduled WHINSEC Board of Visitors meetings?

Yes, I will, if confirmed.

Iranian Influence in Latin America

There has been increased concern in recent years about Iran's growing interest in Latin America, particularly its relations with Venezuela, which in turn has played a key role in Iran's expanding relations with Bolivia, Ecuador, and Nicaragua. There has been disagreement, however, over the extent and significance of Iran's relations with the region.

What is your assessment of Iran's military presence and objectives in the region?

I believe Iran's efforts in the region have primarily been undertaken to circumvent international sanctions which have resulted in Iranian diplomatic and political isolation. I believe Iran also intends to undermine U.S. influence in the USSOUTHCOM region. While Iranian engagement and influence had waned in recent years, President Ruhani has indicated Tehran intends to

increase economic, scientific, and cultural ties with Latin America. I am not aware of any increase in uniformed Iranian military presence in the region.

What is the extent of Iran's military-to-military engagement with Latin American countries?

As the foremost state sponsor of terrorism, Iran's involvement in the region remains a matter for concern. Iranian overt engagement has focused mainly on enhancing its economic and diplomatic ties to the region, and it has not made significant progress in increasing its arms sales to the region.

What is your understanding of Hezbollah's activities in the hemisphere?

As I understand it, Lebanese Hezbollah maintains an extensive regional network of supporters and sympathizers in the region, some of whom are involved in trade-based money laundering and other illicit activities to generate revenue, a portion of which goes to support the parent organization in the Middle East. Despite this focus on financial gain, Lebanese Hezbollah maintains an operational infrastructure in the region with the capability to conduct or support Iranian or Hizballah terrorist attacks with little to no warning.

Special Operations Personnel in Embassies

U.S. Special Operations Command deploys personnel to work with country teams in a number of priority countries where the United States is not engaged in direct action operations, but rather trying to stop the spread of violent extremism. Their mission is to support the priorities of the Ambassador and the Geographic Combatant Commander's theater campaign plan against terrorist networks.

If confirmed, what do you intend to do to make sure the goals of special operations personnel deployed to these countries are aligned closely with those of the Ambassadors they are working with?

If confirmed, I would personally reach out to Ambassadors in the region to ensure our activities remain aligned with their objectives. Prior to deploying any forces, we would provide planning direction through USSOUTHCOM's Theater Campaign Plan. Military personnel embedded within U.S. Country Teams use this direction to develop Country Cooperation Plans, which directly support and are aligned with their respective Ambassadors' Mission Strategic Resource Plans. Prior to and during execution of activities, my staff would review all deployments, including that of Special Operation Forces, to ensure they meet requirements that have been vetted by the Ambassador and the U.S. Country Teams.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response in U.S. Southern Command

What is your assessment of the challenges in implementing an effective sexual assault prevention and response program in U.S. Southern Command and the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility?

Sexual assault has no place in the U.S. military. It has a devastating and life-long impact on the victims and is detrimental to unit morale, cohesiveness, and readiness. Ensuring an unambiguous zero tolerance policy across any large organization is a critical priority. Further, there should be no doubt or ambiguity that sexual assault is a violation of the Uniformed Code of Military Justice and will be investigated and prosecuted accordingly under all applicable regulations and policies. If confirmed, I will communicate and enforce a culture in which all personnel uphold the highest standards of respect for their fellow service members.

What steps would you take to create an environment that encourages reporting and investigation of sexual assault, and that provides appropriate accountability for substantiated allegations of sexual assaults within deployed forces in a joint environment, and how would you, if confirmed, ensure such accountability?

Deployed joint forces confront command and control issues inherent to the differences among Services and missions across sometimes very long distances. If confirmed, I would ensure that all sexual assault allegations are fully investigated, that perpetrators are held accountable by their appropriate chains of command, and that all victims are cared for and shielded from retribution. The Department of the Army, which is the executive agency for U.S. Southern Command, has instituted a comprehensive Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) program training support package to provide training to all military personnel. This includes a zero tolerance policy that ensures all incidents are handled using the exact procedures outlined in Department of Defense directives and policy, which promote sensitive care, confidential reporting for victims of sexual assault, and 100% accountability for those who commit these crimes. U.S. Southern Command recently appointed a second Sexual Assault Response Coordinator to the Headquarters, which is an excellent step towards ensuring a culture of accountability and support. If confirmed, I would continue to communicate and enforce this zero tolerance policy while creating and fostering a culture of support and protection for victims.

Recently, this Committee received testimony about troubling allegations concerning sexual assault by senior officials for coalition partners in Afghanistan.

In your view, what is the appropriate role for a U.S. military commander who is working with senior foreign officials of partner nations, if that U.S. officer becomes aware of allegations of sexual misconduct by the foreign officer or by officials of the foreign nation?

If confirmed, I would direct all U.S. personnel serving under my command to immediately report any such allegation through their chain of command. In the case that coordination is required

with the foreign military or government, I would work closely with the U.S. Ambassador in the foreign nation.

If confirmed, what direction would you give to U.S. personnel assigned in the SOUTHCOM AOR who become aware of such allegations?

If confirmed, I would direct all U.S. personnel serving under my command to immediately report any such allegation through their chain of command. I will also emphasize discipline in the ranks and a strong culture of accountability and personal responsibility.

Under what circumstances would you expect U.S. personnel under your command to intervene to stop such misconduct if they suspect it or observe it?

U.S. personnel should immediately report any such misconduct through their chain of Command. Direct intervention should only occur in the case of a life or death situation.

Mental Health of Servicemembers and Stress on the Force

The Committee is concerned about the stress on military personnel and their families resulting from repeated deployments and their access to mental health care to deal with this increased stress.

In your view, are there sufficient mental health assets embedded within U.S. Southern Command to address the mental health needs of the military personnel, particularly for those who have experienced multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as military families?

As I understand it, the majority of forces that deploy within the USSOUTHCOM AOR rely on their parent service for medical care during post-deployment, including the very important post-deployment monitoring of mental health. During deployment, I am told USSOUTHCOM's Command Surgeon closely monitors all command mental health issues and ensures that the command provides immediate support, if necessary. Personnel assigned to the U.S. Southern Command Headquarters have their medical needs met through a small U.S. Army Health Clinic located at the Headquarters. I have been told that a mental health professional is assigned to this clinic and that patients may also be referred to the local VA hospital, clinics, and civilian providers to address their mental health needs. I understand that family members and retirees are also supported by the Garrison Employee Assistance Program as well as TRICARE.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief

What should be the role for the U.S. military in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief in the SOUTHCOM AOR?

As outlined in the Unified Command Plan, the U.S. military is responsible for conducting

foreign humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in support of the lead federal agency (USAID/OFDA), at the direction of the President or the Secretary of Defense in response to a request from the affected host nation.

Are the resources necessary to fulfill this role currently available to the SOUTHCOM Commander? If not, what additional resources are necessary?

As I understand it, mandated budget and workforce reductions have impacted U.S. Southern Command's ability to rapidly respond to a significant contingency without substantial headquarters augmentation. If confirmed, I would examine USSOUTHCOM's current capabilities to respond to a natural disaster or humanitarian crisis and work through the Joint Staff and Services to source requirements.

Law of the Sea Convention

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is pending consideration in the United States Senate.

What is your view on whether or not the United States should join the Law of the Sea Convention?

As an official policy matter, I defer questions associated with the U.N. Law of the Sea Convention to the Secretary of the Navy. However, as a senior joint officer with relevant maritime experience, I fully support the U.S. accession to the Convention.

How would being a party to the Law of the Sea Convention help or hinder the United States' security posture?

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) codifies navigation and overflight rights on the high seas and ensures rights of transit through international straits, both of which are essential for the mobility of U.S. armed forces. UNCLOS supports our National Security Strategy and helps advance our economic and security objectives. As a senior Naval officer I know that as a matter of customary law, the U.S. is already in compliance.

Science and Technology

As with other Combatant Commands, a Science and Technology (S&T) advisor is assigned to support SOUTHCOM.

If confirmed, what would be your priorities for the SOUTHCOM Science and Technology advisor?

My priorities for the Science and Technology Advisor would focus on applying innovative and sustainable technologies that support Command priority missions and maintain security and

stability in the AOR. That would include technologies like surveillance, non-lethal weapons, communications, logistics, information sharing, foliage penetration, cyber security, and maritime security. Science and technology is an excellent tool to foster enduring partnerships and coalition collaboration. I would also direct the Science and Technology Advisor to continue working with established and new partners, both domestically and internationally, to mitigate any technology surprises that would challenge theater security.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise its legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress are able to receive testimony, briefings, and other communications of information.

Do you agree, if confirmed for this high position, to appear before this Committee and other appropriate committees of the Congress?

Yes, I do.

Do you agree, when asked, to give your personal views, even if those views differ from the administration in power?

Yes, I do.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to appear before this Committee, or designated members of this Committee, and provide information, subject to appropriate and necessary security protection, with respect to your responsibilities as the Commander, U.S. Southern Command?

Yes, I do.

Do you agree to ensure that testimony, briefings and other communications of information are provided to this Committee and its staff and other appropriate Committees?

Yes, I do.

Do you agree to provide documents, including copies of electronic forms of communication, in a timely manner when requested by a duly constituted Committee, or to consult with the Committee regarding the basis for any good faith delay or denial in providing such documents?

Yes, I do.